

Daily Eagle

M. M. MURDOCK, Editor.
R. P. MURDOCK, Business Manager.
Publishers and Proprietors.

Members of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association.

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AMUSEMENTS.

Free! Free!



The Shaker Concert Co.

Will begin their series of Open-Air Concerts

Wednesday Evening, August 15

Corner of Market and First Streets

Admission free for adults. Children under 18 will be charged 10c. Children in arms not admitted.

Doors Open at 7:30 p. m. Concert Begins at 8:30 p. m.

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KEPT GIANT SLOTHS

How Patagonians Lived Thousands of Years Ago.

DR. A. SMITH WOODWARD

Makes One of the Most Remarkable Discoveries to Date.

The New York Herald says: What is perhaps the most remarkable discovery that has been recorded up to date regarding prehistoric man is announced on such authority as to be entirely beyond cavil or charge of sensationalism. It is that natives of Patagonia, savage or semi-savage, did, some thousands of years ago, keep in captivity and domestication, for their meat and possibly for their milk, certain gigantic sloths nearly related to the extinct megatherium. To prove the fact Dr. A. Smith Woodward, a well known English investigator, and Dr. Moreno, of the National Museum of Argentina, have laid before the Zoological Society of London specimens of the bones and hides of the animals, which were found in ancient stone walled stables, unmistakably such, together with great stores of cut hay (the latter being obviously fodder for the beasts), the shoulder blades of a man and implements of human manufacture.

There are reasons to believe that one or more specimens of this extraordinary creature still live in Patagonia. In order to get at the bottom of the controversy that has arisen concerning them, and, if possible, capture a living specimen and bring it back to civilization, C. Arthur Pearson, the London publisher, is fitting out an expedition which will very shortly leave England. This expedition will be in charge of Mr. H. S. Pritchard, assisted by Mr. J. E. Scrivenor, both well known scientists. Mr. Pritchard says: "I have visited the remains discovered by Dr. Moreno, in company with many of the most eminent of our zoologists. These gentlemen all agree that the giant sloth of which they examined the skin and other remains must have been living within at the longest fifty years, while several good authorities put the limit at ten years. But more important than this I have special information from an unimpeachable source that fresh tracks of recent date have been seen within the last two years."

The animal in question, to which the name "Mylodon darwini" or "griffin-beast" has been given, was much like the megatherium, but only about one-half the size. It was about as big as two large oxen, measuring perhaps ten feet from the snout to the tip of the tail, and weighing perhaps 2,000 pounds. Exceedingly stupid and clumsy, it was so sluggish of movement that one might easily imagine a whole day expended in leading it to the water of a nearby stream and another day consumed in leading it back. It is probable, however, that water as well as food was taken to its pen. Certainly it is impossible to conceive of a domesticated brute more uncouth and strange. It was covered with long yellow hair, considerable quantities of which were found in the "stables" referred to, together with other accumulations of excrement long confined.

Incredulous of some of the facts related by the traveler, and made a trip recently to Last Hope Inlet, in Southern Patagonia, near which the remains were discovered, and investigated the matter for himself. He came back convinced, bringing with him an additional piece of "evidence" which, together with the few claws of the animal. Since then Dr. Rudolph Hayth, biologist of the La Plata Museum, has made further excavations on the spot and has obtained many bones of the beasts which were in such a remarkable state of preservation that they were only very slightly discolored, and had lost none of their gelatinous apparently. Remnants of cartilage, dried fragments and shivered muscles were found attached to them in some cases.

One reason for the excellent preservation of the bones was simply that the natives who domesticated the huge sloth built the pens for them (in this instance, at all events) in caverns exceedingly dry. Some of the bones were so white that they did not look as if they had been buried at all.

Chas. H. Pritchard, a well known, commonly accepted authority on the subject of the fossil remains of the earth has been furnished by these natural places of storage. All of the material unearthed in this case has been obtained by digging beneath the floor of an enormous chamber, which seems to have been enclosed formerly by rude walls built of rough stones. The enclosure was in fact a stable or corral, in which the "griffin-beast" were confined and in one corner of it was covered the great store of hay, evidently cut by the natives for fodder.

In digging these distinct strata were found. First there was a thin surface layer of ash, shells and bones of various kinds. Next came a layer of bones, mostly of the same kind, but with a few bones of a different kind. This was a stratum of about three feet thick composed mainly of brownish dirt and "griffin-beast" bones. Interspersed with the bones of the beasts were a few bones of the sloth, certain human remains and the bones of beasts identified as an extinct species of horse and a very large creature of the cat tribe, likewise extinct. This cat was about as big as a modern Bengal tiger much larger than the extinct lion and seems to have been introduced from Europe. It was nearly related to the modern ounce (Felis concolor). Man was found represented in this stratum by a shoulder blade which shows signs of disease, and two awls made from the leg bones of a dog. Other evidence of the presence of the beasts, however, was supplied by the bones and hide fragments of the griffin-beast. One skull showed a fracture which was undoubtedly made when the animal was killed, presumably by a stone axe, and other indications proved that the huge creature was there on cut to pieces for cooking and eating, one may suppose.

A piece of skin, over three feet in length, had been partly stripped of its long hair by means of blunt tools of some kind made of which were still perceptible. This piece appeared to be from the upper part of the right fore leg. Some of the bones it should be mentioned, bore marks of fire, as if they had been charred incidentally to the roasting of the flesh.

The notion that the Patagonians may have milked the griffin-beast is nothing more than a suggestion, a mere surmise, in fact—though entirely within the bounds of possibility. They may even have bred them—an idea which obtains some plausibility from the circumstance that some of the bones unearthed are comparatively small in size and evidently from those of a "griffin-beast" in the skulls were found in such good condition that casts were made of the brain cavities, thus reproducing the exact of the brain of the "griffin-beast."

These casts are exceedingly interesting and from them it is ascertained that the griffin-beast, though as stupid, possessed very keen vision, the olfactory lobes being largely developed. In two cases the little bones of the inner ear were preserved, being retained in the cavity behind the drum by the dried soft parts.

Dr. Moreno is inclined to believe that a few specimens of the "griffin-beast" still survive in the unexplored wilds of Patagonia, and this notion is shared by Dr. Ramon Listal, who discovered the first bones of the beast that were found. Indeed, Dr. Listal goes so far as to declare that he caught a glimpse of a living specimen of the "griffin-beast" in a thicket, though, unfortunately, the circumstances were such, a stream intervening, that he was unable to follow it. Other naturalists, however, are exceedingly skeptical on this point, believing that the creature has been extinct for some thousands of years.

It was a large, leagued, shapeless, ungainly brute, with four toes on each of its front feet and three toes on the hind feet. It fed on grasses and the leaves of trees, which latter it frequently uprooted, being enormously strong, and one of its peculiarities was an arrangement of the little bones of its head, together like the stones of a pavement beneath its skin. These stones were irregular in shape and size, but in parts were set in parallel rows quite symmetrically. They may have served to some extent the purpose of a coat of armor, the beast being incapable of running away and possessing with such other defenses except its claws. Very likely the tiger already mentioned was its most deadly and dreaded foe.

It will be remembered, perhaps, that some years ago footprints of supposed griffin-beasts were discovered in the neighborhood of Carson City, Nev. They were very interesting until it was discovered that in reality they were fossil tracks of the "mylodon" an extinct species of sloth slightly bigger than the "griffin-beast." The footprints had been made in mud thousands of years ago, and the mud had hardened into rock, thus preserving them.

There seem to have been three species of griffin-beasts in this hemisphere in ancient times. One, which was much the largest, now known as the megatherium, ranged from Patagonia as far north as Virginia, though occurring in Florida up through the Western States into Oregon. Another was the "mylodon," which ranged from Patagonia up through the Western States into Oregon. Finally, there was the "griffin-beast" which appears to have been exclusively South American.

These beasts were much like modern sloths except that they were of enormous size and had long tails. If, as would seem to be the case, the primitive Patagonians succeeded in domesticating one species of the mighty brutes, it was certainly a wonderful achievement. Apparently they utilized both the hide and the bones for some purpose, but there is no evidence that they tamed the latter.

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After long investigation, the war-risk hard remains, for the most part, an unknown quantity. Actuaries have been puzzling over it for years, but with every war conditions change and modifying circumstances have to be reckoned with. Ten times as many men subjected to the perils of military service die from disease as from wounds, so much depends upon climatic conditions and the probable risk of exposure. During the war with Spain the companies were greatly concerned over the situation, and many agreed to let the additional charges remain as a lien against the policy instead of exacting advance payment of the extra premium. Their experience in that instance was highly satisfactory, owing to the light mortality actually encountered and the cessation of hostilities before there was general exposure to the severities of a tropical summer.

In England the companies faced a similar problem and demanded the additional premium on the ground that the insurance contract should be construed as a business proposition, and not in the light of a patriotic attempt to protect those whose lives were imperiled at the expense of policyholders not similarly exposed. The companies were criticized for a time for their "unfeeling attitude," but later, when the death lists were compiled, it was found that the calculations were not far astray, and that the costs of carrying the risks had been really in excess of the provisions made.

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"We shall not appeal to the government to protect our interests in China, as they are conversant with our requirements and will do everything necessary in our behalf. We have no real estate holdings, and own nothing that can be removed over night. Our business has been conducted on the principle of 'quick remittances,' so that few funds are allowed to accumulate. While our business in China is considerable, it has been for the most part restricted to special lines, because of our unwillingness to risk very much in a hazardous country. Policies there are made payable in dollars, Mexican silver or pounds sterling, according to contract. Chinamen pay the highest rate in the world; no other nation is charged so much for life insurance."

Jack Belts Lynched

For Assault on a Little Girl Sunday Morning.

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